

# READING CULTURE AND LIBRARIES IN CHANGE

## Presentations

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# KEYNOTES AND GUEST SPEAKERS

## **Literature Teaching As Social Action: Why Reading Fiction Matters in an Age of Standardization**

Janet Alsup, Purdue University

This presentation makes an argument for the continued teaching of literature in the secondary school through critical examination of the ongoing “culture wars” between the humanities and the sciences, recent research in cognitive literary studies demonstrating the power of narrative reading, and an analysis of educational trends that have marginalized literature teaching in the US, including standards-based and scripted curricula. The paper concludes by synthesizing these various arguments for literary study in the middle and high school and providing sample lesson plans from practicing teachers exemplifying how literature can positively influence adolescents’ intellectual, emotional, and social selves.

In order to make this argument, I have organized this presentation into three main parts. The paper presentation begins with an overview of the argument and the theories and philosophies on which it is built: the co-called culture wars between the sciences and humanities, the nature of knowledge in the digital age, modern conceptions of objectivity and quantification as truth, and the literary experience as understood through scholars of narrative and theory of mind, the theory that reading fictional literature can help readers empathize or better understand the perspectives of others. The second part focuses on the literary experience, or “what literature can do,” for young readers by exploring the theory and research supporting how reading fiction can increase abilities of readers to identify and empathize with others, think critically, and even engage in philanthropic behavior. In this section, I also include a brief case study of a research project I conducted with middle school teachers during which the teachers were not able to engage in teaching literature to enhance students’ social imaginations as they were distracted by standards-based and standardized curriculum. The third part of the presentation summarizes and synthesizes the arguments in the previous sections, making connections among the philosophic discussions of truth and knowledge, US educational policy quantifying and corporatizing teaching and learning, and scholarship and research about the power of the literary experience.

## **Meaning and Motivation in Literature Education – a Finnish Perspective**

Satu Grünthal, University of Helsinki

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the role of literature education in Finnish schools in comparison to Professor Janet Alsup's key note on the situation in the US. In contrast to the rather standardized and scripted educational policies in the US, the Finnish national curricula and educational principles represent a somewhat different approach to teaching literature. However, many of the essential issues brought up by Professor Alsup, concerning the overall status of literature in education and the powerful potentials of the literary experience for young readers, appear to be the same in these two countries.

Finland has so far scored high in reading and literacy skills in the international PISA and PIRLS studies but reading habits of the young are rapidly changing. At present, the declining motivation of the youth to read fiction and their deteriorating reading skills are constant concerns in the Finnish society, media and educational field.

The role of motivation and the concept of 'the love of reading' in literature education will be discussed in the presentation. In the light of two ongoing research projects in Finnish elementary and secondary schools on the national level, the methods of literature circles, societal reading and shared reading experiences will be considered. The amount and choice of books read in Finnish schools are also taken into account.

## **Reading history in the mass-digitized age: opportunities and challenges**

Katherine Bode, Australian National University

In Australia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lending libraries were accessible to only 3% of the population (Askew and Hubber) and half of all local literary journals are estimated to have collapsed in their first year of operation (Lurline 1). But there were hundreds of newspapers, and this thriving industry provided readers' main source of fiction: local and imported. In Australia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the National Library of Australia's *Trove* database hosts the largest open-access, mass-digitized collection of historical newspapers internationally.

This fortunate confluence of two technological systems (newspapers and mass-digitization) enabled the discovery of over 16,000 publications of novels, novellas and short stories in 19<sup>th</sup> century Australian newspapers. As well as dramatically increasing our record of literature in Australia and Australian literature, this body of works enables insights into the cosmopolitanism of the early Australian reading public (newspaper fiction came from around the world, including America, Austria, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, and beyond). The resulting database of fiction (<http://cdhrdatasys.anu.edu.au/tobecontinued/>) also supports new understandings on the relationship between reception and the emergence of a national literary tradition.

With reference to this newspaper fiction project, this paper explores the opportunities and challenges for reading history presented by new mass-digitized collections, and the digital methods for analyzing them, including important issues of scale, modes of inquiry, and data sustainability: Is bigger always better in big data research, or is the situation more complex? What new data-rich methods are useful for reading history? And what happens to all this data when our projects finish? I also demonstrate

how crowdsourcing has enabled the contemporary Australian reading public to engage with the fiction that formed and sustained their historical counterparts.

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## Speaking of reading motivation in Finland as part of a global discourse

Ilkka Mäkinen, Tampere University

I am going to talk about a particular section of the general discourse on reading, namely, the discourse on the motivation for reading, that is, what answers have been given to the question: What makes people to read? How this is related to Prof. Bode's keynote that precedes my paper will be evident in the course of my speech. My aim is to present a perspective of *longue durée* in the discourse on reading motivation. How did the discourse begin, how did it evolve through the centuries, even millennia, among the speakers (or, more exactly, writers) of the European and world's languages? How did the triumph of this discourse turn into a crisis? I will tell in my paper about a research project that I am conducting in cooperation with Prof. Jukka Tyrkkö (Linnaeus University, Sweden). In our research we are using Google Ngram Viewer and more sophisticated linguistic corpora to follow the changes in the frequencies of use of a number of pertinent words and phrases in English and other languages, and in that way visualizing the evolution of the discourse on reading. To illustrate the conceptual and contextual character of our project I shall present Finland as a laboratory experiment. How Finland during centuries was in contact with the European discourse on reading? Special attention will be given to the role of reading – and love of reading – in the educational ideology of the Fennoman movement and its lasting effect on the cultural development in Finland. After a continuous rise of 150 years in literacy, habit of reading and library use, we are facing a crisis, we are part of a global crisis. How is this visible in the discourse of reading, and what should we do about it?

### Literature (all available electronically):

Mäkinen, Ilkka: Leselust, Goût de la Lecture, Love of Reading: Patterns in the discourse on reading in Europe from the 17th until the 19th century. In: *Good Book, Good Library, Good Reading. Studies in the History of the Book, Libraries and Reading from the Network HIBOLIRE and Its Friends*. Edited by Aušra Navickienė et al. Tampere: TUP, 2013.

—: From literacy to love of reading: The Fennomanian Ideology of Reading in the 19th-century Finland – *Journal of Social History* 48(2015): 287-299.

—: Love of reading meets PISA Assessments: Historical insights in the discourse on reading motivation. – *Knygotyra* 70(2018): 57-77.

## **A primer on data- and text mining for content analysis**

Tomas Eklund, Uppsala University

In the big data era, the importance of the ability to analyze varying forms of data is becoming ever more important. This is especially true for textual data, which is often claimed to account for around 80% of all data used for decision making. This presentation will introduce the audience to commonly used text mining approaches for content analysis of large amounts of textual data. Firstly, the special nature of text will be discussed and the relation between data and text mining will be presented. Then, commonly used preprocessing steps from the realm of Natural Language Processing (NLP) will be presented and motivated. The focus will be on preparing data for a word frequency-based approach (Bag of Words), but other preprocessing approaches will also be touched upon. After introducing the bag of words approach, the presentation will illustrate how common data mining operations can be applied to perform content based analysis, including document classification and sentiment analysis, document clustering and topic modeling, and word association analysis. Operations will be illustrated using examples from the literature.

## **Library users' wants and needs in the age of digital ubiquity**

J. Tuomas Harviainen, Tampere University

As a response to Dr. Eklund's keynote, I will discuss the ways in which library and archive users' requirements can and still maybe sometimes cannot be accessed with current data processing techniques. Using service innovation and design's differentiation between users' and non-users' wants and needs, I illustrate how issues such as convenience, easy access to certain tools but not others, and cognitive biases, may still interfere with what would seem like logical information seeking processes. As recommender systems' popularity grows and their apparent accuracy increases, it is necessary to still look into human seeking patterns as well, so that the two can be combined in the most efficient and user-friendly manner possible.

## **E-searching the common European reader**

Brigitte Ouvry-Vial, Le Mans University

*E-searching the common European reader* delves in the state of knowledge in reading studies to highlight the changes observed in reading habits as well as in our scholarly understanding of its process at large. As reading remains a complex mental activity that is hard to record, the new technologies of the book as well as the correlated enhanced social impact of reading also raise the needs for community based history form below of reading, as well as interdisciplinary research methods and tools to explore its diverse and scattered resources. Such is the purpose of READ-IT or Reading Europe Advanced Data Investigation Tool funded by the European Joint Programming Initiative for Cultural Heritage (2018-2021 [www.readit-project.eu](http://www.readit-project.eu)): this SSH lead, ICT driven project and agile development aims at enabling scholars, professionals and the broad public an access to 18th to the 21st centuries reading experiences in Europe as well as a potentially fresh perspective about its main common features.

## **Reading as Social Agency: Sharing Readerly Experiences on the Blogosphere**

Tuija Saresma, University of Jyväskylä

Although often understood as a solitary act, reading seldom is practised in isolation. Book clubs are a manifestation of the social character of reading, as they gather people together to discuss literature. The internet with its plethora of blogs focused on books and reading – be they ‘book blogs’, ‘reader blogs’, or ‘literary blogs’ – takes the social aspects of reading to a next level by multiplying the (potential) amount of members of discussion and transgressing physical boundaries, enabling virtual and transnational reader communities.

The rise of social media has witnessed the emergence of book blogs, where reader/bloggers share their experiences of reading and their interpretations of books. The followers of the blogs may, in addition to reading the blog posts, often also become involved in discussing the books in question. Participation is rewarding, as the readers are allowed to share their thoughts and feelings and exchange opinions about the meanings of books and reading.

Based on reading a selection of book blogs and their comment sections, I suggest that reading is a clearly social act. Not only reading, but sharing the experiences of reading online makes book blogs an interesting field to analyse the varied, more or less affective responses to literature and the several functions of reading in the digital era. Approaching reading, reception, and meaning-making negotiations online, emphasising the individual experiences and the social negotiations around them, demonstrates that there is a variety of ways to position oneself in the digital readerly communities.

In the light of this, it is perhaps worth asking, who is “the common European reader”, or even, is there one? Using intersectionality as my methodological tool, I suggest that reading as an act takes different forms and may have several functions depending on the context. Thus, it is important to pay attention to the differences of the readers and the variation of their gender, age, education, geographical location, sexual orientation, and social class, just to name a few.

# SESSIONS

## Session I

### **Young Readers 1: Reading Fiction in Upper Secondary Schools: Changes and New Approaches**

#### **Theoretical underpinnings of teaching literature: the resilience of New Criticism**

Aino Mäkikalli, University of Turku

What kind of theory or approaches to literature is the teaching of literature in contemporary school based on?

In this presentation, I take into account the historical perspective of the relation between literary theory and teaching of literature, and consider how this relationship appears in the present situation in the context of Finnish Upper Secondary literary education. I will focus on how some of the main ideas of New Criticism have lived in literary teaching in Finland.

In general, until the mid-20th century, literary knowledge and, through it, the strengthening of national identity seem to be at the heart of Finnish literary teaching (cf. Rikama 1990, 170). The next decades of the 20th century brought a new perspective to international literary research. The interest shifted from the authors, their living conditions, the cultural and historical background of the works to the texts themselves; Russian formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism emphasized the special features of a work of literary art. Literary text was considered as textual and artistic construction and it was also analyzed by taking a close look into various aspects of the text. The approach required analytical and critical literacy, which aims at *interpretation*.

New Criticism landed at Finnish universities and, as a result, at Finnish school education in the 1950s. The theory influenced the teaching of literature significantly, and it seems that the approach is still valid at least in Upper Secondary School. Koskela and Rojola has argued (1997, 30), that even today, the analysis and interpretation of literature in schools is based on New Criticism. Moreover, Leena Kirstinä (2011, 49) notes that the type of “analyze and interpret a text” assignment has been included in upper secondary school curricula since the 1985 curriculum. Kirstinä (2011, 50) has looked at this type of assignment and suggests that “analyze and interpret” is to be understood primarily as *a text-based close-reading exercise*, where the writer performs best if, in addition to the content, she notices, for example, motives, metaphor, contradictions and the ability to reflect on the narrator.

My eventual question is, is close reading still the most effective way to activate young people to fiction? Will the method help young people to become more active literary enthusiasts and readers in general?

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## **Evaluation of cultural literacy in Finnish upper secondary literature studies**

Elias Heikkonen, University of Turku

The most important means of evaluating upper secondary school students in the Finnish school system is through the Matriculation Examination, which evaluates if and how students have reached the goals of the National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Schools (ÄDKM 24.8. 2018, 1).

One of the main focuses of evaluation in the Finnish Matriculation Examination is cultural literacy, which can be understood as the general ability to understand different cultural meanings. It is therefore a fundamental type of literacy on which further forms such as critical literacy rest (Leino 2006, 595–596).

Because of the importance of the Matriculation Examination for the future of Finnish Upper Secondary School students (students apply to academic studies based on the results of the examination), the form of the examination and its evaluation principles play a significant role in defining the approaches to studying literature in upper secondary classrooms.

In this presentation I will examine how cultural literacy is understood in different tasks concerning literary fiction in the Finnish Matriculation Examinations from 2007 onwards. I will also compare this to the goals set for literature studies in the National Core Curriculums of 2003 and 2015 and how cultural literacy is understood in these documents. (LOPS 2003; LOPS 2015)

My aim is to study the possible discrepancies between how cultural literacy is understood in the National Core Curriculums and the Matriculation Examinations. From there I will further assess if and how the Matriculation Examination could be developed to more comprehensively evaluate the goals of literature studies set out in the National Core Curriculum.

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## **Towards an Intersectional Reading**

Kaisa Ilmonen, University of Turku

Changes in reading culture also requires changes in literary pedagogy. In this paper, my focus is on intersectionality and its possibilities for teaching literature in upper secondary schools. While critical race studies, queer studies, and feminist criticism have contributed greatly to research on education and critical pedagogical practices, intersectionality remains understudied in pedagogical context. Drawing on intersectional and social justice oriented reading strategies, I suggest frames for teaching literature intersectionally, emphasizing norm critical practices.

Intersectional pedagogy teaches, on the one hand, to understand interactions among the myriad sides of systemic oppression and privilege while also focusing on the situated nature of individual experience. Reading literature, on the other hand, develops understanding the place of the self and the other in the world, culturally, historically, and socially. Curtin, Stewart, and Cole (2015) have reported on positive effects of intersectional awareness in schools: it related to openness to experience, taking in to account the perspectives of others, intentions to create social change and rights-based action. Intersectionality deepens the understanding of the politics of positionality, while intersectional reading captures the complexity of social relations, experiences and structural dynamics that shape the diversity of young people's everyday life.

intersectionality has two organizational focal points, it is both a critical theory and a critical praxis. In my paper, I will combine these two focal points to literary pedagogy by analyzing how this critical theory enables reading as praxis in class rooms. I suggest that intersectional reading provides students the deepened understanding of simultaneous multiple identities and experiences.

Kaisa Ilmonen, PhD, Docent (Adjunct Professor in Minority Literatures)

Comparative Literature

Ilmonen works as a Senior Researcher in the project *How to Read? Forms of Reading in Teaching Literature in the Upper Secondary School*. A Project financed by Koneen Säätiö (Kone Foundation) for the years 2018–2020. Its researchers are from the University of Turku. <https://mitenluemme.wordpress.com/>

## Session II

### Digital poetry / Digitaalinen runous

Language used in the session: **Finnish**

Chair: Karoliina Lummaa, University of Turku, sakalu@utu.fi

Presenters:

Siru Kainulainen, University of Turku

Miikka Laihinen, University of Turku

Karoliina Lummaa, University of Turku

The Digital poetry -session discusses digital poetry and the practical, interpretational and philosophical challenges this emerging art form poses on reading and literature scholarship. Digital means of creating and publishing poetry diversify the makeup of poetic texts and alter the ways poetry is read, experienced and understood. The purpose of the session is to address the diverse issues involved in screen-mediated creating, reading and experiencing of poetic texts. By introducing a variety of approaches and concepts, the papers will also examine how contemporary methodologies developed within various branches of humanities will help to understand, contextualize and conceptualize digital poetry.

Kainulainen focuses on the differences and tensions between reading digital poetry and printed poetry, with a special emphasis on senses. As examples she discusses Tuija Välipakka's electronically published work *On hundred red things in summer 2018* (2018, nokturno.org) and poetry collection *Uutisia! (News!)* (2018, Siltala). Research has emphasized digital environments as a new resource and a possibility for readers of literature (Herkman & Vainikka 2012). However, a study of the attitudes of readers utilizing the web reveals that the readers still consider themselves as traditional users (Matikainen & Villi 2015). Accordingly, an active usership of web-based platforms is still understood in terms of content-production. Reading as such does not count as active usership. Is it possible, Kainulainen asks, that poetry in its "traditional" printed forms is still able to activate the senses more thoroughly and "demand" more from its readers. As the reception and reading experiences of E-books has not yet been adequately studied (cf. Kajander 2015), the paper will formulate a series of preliminary questions and suggest approaches to address questions concerning active readership and sensorial experientiality.

Laihinen discusses the philosophical aspects of digital poetry with a special emphasis on ontology. In a stark contrast to static textual objects of printed poetry, the moving images of digital, program-based poems offer a new challenge for readers. The digital format dissolves all spatio-temporal limitations of printed literature – a change that requires philosophical reflection as well.. Laihinen addresses digital poetry as texts that surpass bodily capabilities. Philosopher Baruch Spinoza highlighted the human body as a new philosophical model: according to Spinoza, the body always exceeds all information we have on it. Based on Spinoza's ontological monism Laihinen argues that words in poetry can be examined as bodily entities. Drawing also from the conceptual frameworks of speculative philosophy Laihinen examines the potentialities of digital word bodies. He asks, what are these digital word bodies capable of, as their stability as representative signs is questioned and challenged by new modes of poetic expression.

Lummaa's topic is agency. Within posthumanist literary studies, the question of authorship has been challenged by the notion of nonhuman agencies. Focusing on one visual poem, "damage" (2008, nokturno.org) by Jukka-Pekka Kervinen, Lummaa addresses the multiple agencies of digital poetry. "damage" opens up a seemingly three-dimensional space of partly effaced words "written" in

different colors. The poem is created with a computer program written by Kervinen, based on stochastic/cybernetic algorithms. By changing the angle of the screen the reader is able to manipulate the color contrasts and thus the material makeup of the poem. Drawing from N. Katherine Hayles's (1999) remarks on the changing experience of reading text from the screen (or the *flickering signifiers* as she calls the signs of digital texts), digital poetry can be studied by observing the multiple nonhuman agencies and powers of human poetic and programmatic authorship, computer hardware and software, electricity, and other objects, systems, and processes uncommon to any classical humanist notion of poetry.

## Session III

### **Narrative Agency, Metanarrativity and Bibliotherapy: The Potential of Reading Metanarrative Fiction**

Hanna Meretoja, Päivi Kosonen & Eevastiina Kinnunen

We would like to propose a session in which we explore the key issues of our research project *Identity Work: Narrative Agency, Metanarrativity and Bibliotherapy* (PI Hanna Meretoja, part of the consortium *Instrumental Narratives: The Limits of Storytelling and New Story-Critical Narrative Theory*, Academy of Finland, 2018–2022). The project focuses on the uses and abuses of narrative in the construction of lives and identities. Over the past few decades, the notion of “finding one’s own narrative” has pervaded the culture at large. In response, contemporary narrative fiction has increasingly come to reflect on the problematic uses of narrative in identity work. Our team brings into dialogue contemporary metanarrative fiction and the broader uses of narrative in contemporary consumer culture in which narrative identity is often understood in narrow, limiting, and commercially motivated ways. Our proposed session consists of three parts.

First, Hanna Meretoja will present the overall aims and hypotheses of the project. She will explicate how contemporary metanarrative fiction self-reflexively thematizes the significance and functions of cultural narrative models in our lives. She discusses how such fiction explores the roles of cultural narrative models in storying lives and the problematic ways in which stories are used for manipulative purposes. She will outline the hypothesis that such fiction can amplify narrative agency and that this insight can be developed into a new approach to therapeutic and non-therapeutic reading in reading group settings.

Second, Päivi Kosonen and Eevastiina Kinnunen will present “Narrative, Reading and Wellbeing”, which is a sub-project of our Academy of Finland project. In the last few years there has been an increasing amount of research on the benefits of reading. While the humanist and phenomenological approach has focused on literary art as a source of wisdom, as a vehicle of personal development and compassion (Gregory 2009; Pettersson T., 2009), some recent research has focused on collective reading practices (Brewster, 2010, 2016). In Britain for instance Josie Billington (2010, 2017) and her colleagues have developed a literature-based method of “Shared Reading”, which has reportedly had positive effects on people who suffer from depression and chronic pain. Our project aims to map different collective reading practices, and hopes to add some new methods and models to this area of research. In the first stage of the project we train literature students to facilitate different kinds of reading groups. At the centre of our project are creative reading groups, in which people read and write, and shared reading groups, where people meet to read books together and to share experiences. We will also develop metanarrative versions of these groups where discussion is facilitated towards themes around narrativity and identity. We are interested in the participants’ experiences and wellbeing and will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (including interviews, questionnaires, self-reflective texts written by both facilitators and participants). Central to our approach are issues of narrative agency, future-oriented hope, and a “sense of the possible” (Meretoja 2018).

Third, we would like to give a demonstration of one kind of reading group session and test particularly the new method informed by metanarrativity that we are developing in the project. During the workshop the participants will read a metanarrative short story, write and discuss in the facilitated

session. This demonstration provides a great opportunity for us to test our method and get feedback from the participants of the conference.

### **Bios**

Hanna Meretoja is Professor of Comparative Literature, Director of *SELMA: Centre for the Study of Storytelling, Experientiality and Memory*, and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Turku (Finland). Her research is mainly in the fields of critical theory, narrative studies, hermeneutics and narrative ethics. Her publications include *The Narrative Turn in Fiction and Theory* (2014, Palgrave Macmillan), *Storytelling and Ethics: Literature, Visual Arts and the Power of Narrative* (co-edited, 2018, Routledge), and *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History, and the Possible* (2018, Oxford University Press). She is the PI of the Turku-based team of the consortium *Instrumental Narratives: The Limits of Storytelling and New Story-Critical Narrative Theory* (Academy of Finland, 2018-2022).

Päivi Kosonen, PhD, senior researcher of comparative literature (School of History, Culture and Arts Studies), and trained bibliotherapist and bibliotherapeutic educator. Member of SELMA (Centre for the Study of Storytelling, Experientiality and Memory) and part of the Turku-based team in the Academy of Finland consortium (2018–2022) *Instrumental Narratives: The Limits of Storytelling and New Story-Critical Narrative Theory*.

Eevastiina Kinnunen works as a research assistant in comparative literature at the University of Turku, and is currently finalising her Master's thesis in comparative literature. I am interested in the question of truth in literature and in the different ways that reading and writing can shape our narrative understanding. I am a member of the Turku-based team in the project "Instrumental Narratives: The Limits of Storytelling and New Story-Critical Narrative Theory", which is funded by the Academy of Finland. I also work as a bibliotherapist and creative writing instructor.

## Session IV

### Young Readers 2: Stories, Reading and Learning

#### **Stories Make Readers (StoRe) –project concentrates on creating communities of reading**

Merja Kauppinen, Finnish National Evaluation Center & Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku:

Stories make readers (StoRe) –projects is a Finnish project concentrating on supporting educators in creating positive reading climate with the children in their groups. Additionally, the educators are encouraged to share their pedagogical innovations and test new pedagogical approaches with the support of other educators and experts. The StoRe-project was initially a one-year (academic year 2017-2018) project with several sub-studies promoting literature reading. This piloting project was implemented in a network of 10 class teachers in Finland. The Store-project strives for its goals with the following principals: 1) promoting educators' and adults' consciousness of their readership, 2) supporting educators' agency as a literature instructor and 3) creating a positive culture of reading in their groups that enable the society of readers. In addition to pedagogical innovations, StoRe-project includes research on the readerships of the teachers and children. In this presentation, we aim to present different perspectives to the multiple factors of creating communities of readers. The results highlight how the means of making children read more are not difficult or require substantial financial resources. Creating readers is a question of values: By offering interesting reading materials, connecting reading with interesting and social activities as well as giving time to reading and sharing reading experiences created a positive reading climate and makes reading appear as meaningful activity.

Key words: communities of readers, positive readership, reading climate

#### **It is all about books! – The project Ytimessä moves books and reading to the heart of all learning**

Eeva-Maija Niinistö, The Teacher Training School of Rauma, Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku, Merja Kauppinen, Finnish National Evaluation Center & Suvi Sario, The Teacher Training School of Rauma

Several international and national studies on reading show that reading is the basement of almost all learning and academic success. Additionally, positive self-confidence is closely connected to reading skills. The project Ytimessä – Kirja kaiken oppimisen keskiöön (Core – Moving Books to the Center of All Learning) is a national project of three teacher training schools (Rauma, Turku and Joensuu) and funded by the Finnish National Board of Education. The project aims at increasing the use of fiction in primary education. It strives for its goals with different approaches and subprojects in close co-operation with the school library. In this presentation, we concentrate on the role of parents in creating positive readership and improving reading skills. During the project, the parents are activated in different ways: by family reading events at schools, by bedtime story shelves (a pedagogical innovation of StoRe-project), having parents' nights with themes of fiction and implementing the suggestions of parents on making reading more enjoyable into practice. By highlighting the positive

readership of parents, the project makes reading fiction an eligible activity. The results of this study show that parents understand the value of reading skills but are often unsure or unaware while supporting their children in becoming readers. For example, the bedtime story shelf used in this project gave a concrete and easy to approach tool for the parents in early childhood education and made the children equal from the perspective of gaining good reading skills.

Key words: readings skills, emergent readers, adult support

### **Children's literature provides support for the social emotional growth of children early childhood education**

Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku, Merja Kauppinen, Finnish National Evaluation Center, Pirjo Suvilehto, University of Oulu & Marita Neitola, University of Turku

The social emotional difficulties of children are among the biggest challenges in early childhood education. Children's literature could provide essential support to young children, families and teachers when dealing with difficult issues of growing up. Children's books allow a child to understand their environment, situation, community, and societal expectations. The project Rinnalla (Alongside - The arts and narrative-based mentoring as a support for learning social emotional skills in early childhood education) concentrates on creating creative and effective pedagogical approaches of using children's literature and other art forms in early childhood education. It seems that with small children children's literature is still being used mostly to entertain children or as a part of the daytime moments and literature is poorly used from the viewpoint of social and emotional capabilities. In this presentation, we aim to describe two literature-based methods used in the project: StoRe and Pritney. The StoRe-method concentrates on focused book collections implemented together with local libraries, activating the parents, connecting literature with child-centered activities and creating spaces for discussions to connect the contents of literature with children's own experiences. Pritney-method is based on arts-based activities, especially word art, and the approaches of bibliotherapy. Additionally, Pritney-method is closely connected to animal-assisted activities and puppetry. The Finnish National Board of Education funds the project during December 2018 – June 2020.

Key words: arts-based activities, bibliotherapy, children's literature

## Session V

### Reading in a Digital Era

#### **Digital Reading and Writing Communities as a Resources for Research**

Hanna-Riikka Roine, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

The digital turn has effected a significant change on the way we approach works of fiction. Storytelling in software-driven, conditional and process-based computational media is not so much about disseminating a single story, as works of fiction now appear to us as something to be cut, pasted and reassembled with ease. As a result, the change challenges the previous research focus on fixed media content and author-controlled model of transmission.

In my paper, I explore and consider the ways in which communities built around reading and writing in the digital media might be used as a resource in the analysis of such change and understanding contemporary literary culture. Analysing not only the ways in which e.g., fanfiction stories are written, but also the ways in which they are discussed, reviewed, applauded and criticised offers us an illuminating perspective into the reading culture in the digital and networked age. Furthermore, as the popularity of content can be understood in terms of putting it into various kinds of uses by means of digital media, my paper provides insights into what people read nowadays and why.

In particular, I discuss an approach to entities such as fictional characters as process-based and open-ended instead of as parts of a finished work within which they fulfil certain functions. This allows us to go more deeply into the socially embedded practices of rewriting, repurposing and “retrofitting” media content – and ask quite profound questions. How and why are the entities such as characters reimagined and repurposed, and on whose terms?

#### **Feeling and sensing literature: Books as material objects in the digital everyday**

Anna Kajander, University of Helsinki

I have recently been analysing a research material “Life as a Reader”, which consists of Finnish peoples written narratives about their reading habits. The material was collected by the Finnish Literature Society in 2014 and it focuses especially on reading as an everyday practice. One of the things the respondents discussed was the recent changes in reading. In this context, the issue of e-books was often mentioned. They were repetitively compared to printed books, and this made many think about the material aspects of reading. Elements such as the smell of books, feel of pages, or atmospheres of spaces with bookshelves were emphasised as positive aspects of reading situations and readership. However, the meanings behind these aspects were not explained.

This raised questions about sensory experiences in book reading. Why would one connect smell or touch to reading? How does the presence or tangibility of books affect reading habits? What should reading feel like? In this presentation, I will discuss the meanings of such sensory elements in the

context of book reading. The theoretical focus is on ethnological material culture studies. I will ask how printed books as sensory and sensitive objects may support reading. I will also discuss, why these aspects are emphasised in the context of e-books and digitalisation of reading.

## **Digital reading experience as an awakener of reading motivation among adolescents**

Lotta-Sofia Aaltonen, University of Helsinki

In my presentation, I will examine the possibilities of digital reading, e-books and audio books, to increase adolescents' reading motivation and boost reading of fiction. My analysis is based on the pilot data of my future larger research, which was gathered with qualitative surveys and interviews from a group of students of grades 7–9 after they had tested a service called Bookbeat. In my analysis, I examine the user experiences of the digital reading experiment and attitudes towards reading in general. Based on the data, I have mapped the factors of digital reading that could increase reading motivation. Despite the limited amount of data, the material collected on the experiment is nevertheless the first of its kind in Finland. In addition, my research offers new information on the problems associated with reading for pleasure based on the youth's perspective as well as guidelines for further research.

Based on my pilot data, one can draw tentative conclusions that digital books, with their features that tie the reading experience closer to the ways young people enjoy their spare time, have a positive effect on reading motivation. The digital format makes it easier to read fiction, helps to find an interesting book and offers the youth of the digital age a natural platform for experiencing reading and thus lowers the threshold of reading a book. My research backs up the notion that inspiring young people to read should happen in interaction with the cultural turning point of reading. It is essential to take into consideration the youth's willingness to use other media than printed text and to not underestimate the literal conventions characteristic of youth culture, digital communication, through which the young people express themselves and seek experiences.

## Session IV

### Libraries in Change

#### **Professional rationales of engaging with library users in the changing culture of reading and library use**

Isto Huvila, Uppsala University

The changes in the practices of reading and the role of books in the contemporary culture have a major impact on libraries and the work of library professionals. The reasons and situations when and why books are read has repercussions to how libraries are used and consequently, to professional practices and rationales of working towards and with library users. Based on the findings from a survey study conducted in 2018 as a part of the ALM-Field, Digitalization, and the Public Sphere (ALMPUB) project financed by the Norwegian Research Council in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Hungary, the presentation analyses librarians' views of the changing rationales of user participation and working with library users in the contemporary culture of reading and library use. The international comparison shows both country-wise differences, divergence of views between individual respondents and broader changes in the perception of the role of libraries and library use in the contemporary society. The findings have implications both to the understanding of how professionals perceive the on-going changes in reading culture and library use and their implications to library work, but provide also a basis for envisioning the role of library collections for readers in the future. The presentation suggests that a key issue is to understand the on-going shift in the practices of reading and the respective roles of books and other forms of media as carriers of information and culture in the contemporary everyday life.

#### **Libraries and the literary long tail**

Pirjo Tuomi, Oulu University of Applied Sciences

Chris Anderson (2007, 36) means by the "long tail" all the articles in a product group. For example, in literature, the long tail contains "hit books" as well as the books that are sold a little but still live their own lives in the book market. Anderson's insight is that a long tail in the online world may be even more important than a hit industry and can create a hit-like market (*ibid.*, 66). E-commerce users can browse through countless products, and while leaving the familiar paths, they realise that their taste is not as mainstream as they had thought or like marketing, hit-centred culture, and a lack of alternatives made them believe (*ibid.*, 29–30).

The focus in the bookstores is on the current books and their selling. Libraries, on the other hand, have always represented the long tail. Library lending naturally emphasises the novelties and hit books, but one can make discoveries too. Similarly to the online bookstores' recommendations by the customers function the return shelves of the traditional libraries, for instance.

Books that practically have run out of life, but still in the long tail can regain demand because of a film version, for example. In the libraries, at least, one should find those books. The long tail is a

vital part of the library institution. Gunnar Hansson (2012, 431) asks what the literary memory of a nation would be like if it were depicted in view of the readers or reading: what kind of literature was read at different times or was felt to be impressive and valuable in the past. Libraries' acquisition and lending statistics could answer such questions. By its collection, the library also manifests the diversity of reading.

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### **Libraries as Sites of Transnational Multilingual Reception of Women's Writing and the Virtual Research Environment**

Viola Parente-Čapková, University of Turku

In this paper, I would like to share and discuss some results from my recent research on "literary reception in libraries" in CRPs Travelling Texts 1790–1914: Transnational Reception of Women's Writing at the Fringes of Europe (Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain), Women's Centres and Peripheries and Texts on the Move: Reception of Women's Writing in Finland and Russia 1840–2020. In these projects, focusing on women's literary exchange and reception of women's work (in my own research, I concentrate on the period of the long 19th century), the starting point has been a broad understanding of the concept of literary reception as well as an objective to map the transnational European literary field from the margins in various senses of the word. In the projects, we began at the 'reception end' of the literary exchange and the way texts authored by women have travelled in Europe. The rationale of these projects has been questioning the relations between centre and periphery from a gendered point of view, exploring, in terms of gender, cultural encounters through reading and writing, with the aim of offering new, transnational models of writing the history of European literary culture.

The broad understanding of the term 'literary reception' means that reception is not understood only in the usual ways, i. e. as translations from one language into another and/or the book reviews in the periodical press. Apart from mapping translations and reviews, the projects have been also studying the presence of authors and texts in the periodical press in a broader sense (apart from reviews, also articles about authors lives, obituaries, book advertisements, etc.) and, among other sources, in library collections, both private and public. Library catalogues and collections have shown that reception of women's writing has been much richer than what we can see from national bibliographies, from data on translated works or from periodical press.

The digital tool these transnational and multilingual receptions, including the library receptions, have been stored in is the Virtual Research Environment (VRE) NEWW (<http://test.resources.huylgens.knaw.nl/womenwriters>), which shows the reception field in a broad European perspective. With the help of several brief case studies, I am going to show how the research

in library collections and the introduction of the library reception data into the VRE can contribute to formulate new research questions in transnational literary history from the point of view of multilingual reception of (women's) writing in both "bigger" and "smaller" languages and literatures.

## Session VII

### Young Readers 3: Literary Landscapes

#### **Finnish primary school pupils' literary landscapes: What do Finnish- and Swedish-speaking pupils read at school?**

Henri Satokangas, Liisa Tainio & Sara Routarinne, University of Helsinki

In the national curriculum for the comprehensive school in Finland, the two national languages, Finnish and Swedish, form the most common syllabi of mother tongue in schools. In the curriculum, the goals of the literature education appear very similar for both Finnish and Swedish-speaking pupils. However, the means to reach these goals differs between the syllabi. In Swedish language and literature syllabus the Nordic context is emphasized, whereas in the syllabus of Finnish language and literature it is not mentioned at all. Yet no specific works of literature are mentioned in the syllabi. Which books do pupils actually read in school?

In the on-going research project Lukuklaani ('Reading Clan') we have an opportunity to take a look at the literary landscapes in primary schools in Finland in detail. Lukuklaani is a project that aims to explore literature education in primary schools (grades 1-6) in Finland; the project is funded by Finnish Cultural Foundation and Kopiosto. Our data consists of the answers to an e-questionnaire that was sent to Finnish primary school teachers in November 2017. We received 884 answers, including 68 answers from Swedish-speaking schools. We asked, for example, what books pupils read and what kind of methods teachers use to motivate the children in reading. In this presentation the focus is set on the books viewed by teachers as the most popular among pupils.

Interestingly, the answers revealed big differences between the literary landscapes. In Finnish-speaking schools, Finnish books are prominent but the variety of the countries of origin is relatively wide. In Swedish-speaking schools, books written in Sweden are notably prominent, whereas different countries are scantily represented and books originally written in Finnish are almost absent. The list of popular books bears a resemblance to the most popular children's literature in libraries.

#### **Swedish Teenagers' Reading in English On- and Off-line**

Lydia Kokkola, Eva Fjällström & Adrian Rodriguez, Luleå University of Technology

This presentation is a report on a four year project involving three researchers at Luleå University of Technology which will reach its conclusion at the time of conference. The goal of the project was to investigate how adolescent EFL readers adjusted their reading strategies to suit their reason for reading in classroom contexts. Swedish teenagers were involved in one of two projects: an ethnographic study of reading literary texts over the course of an academic year or a shorter study in which they searched for information from online sources in order to produce a synthesis and opinion. In both contexts, students' writing was examined for evidence of their reading skills, as well as being examined in its own right in terms of literacy development. Students and teachers were also interviewed about their literacy practices. The ethnographic study focussed on meaning-making and

creativity in relation to the short stories, whereas the online searching activities were examined using techniques developed from big data analytics.

The presentation will provide a general overview of the two sets of data, highlighting the problems students faced which were NOT related to knowledge of English per se (e.g. recognising textual bias) and strategies used to resolve difficulties (e.g. multilingual strategies). It will conclude by outlining a new project involving interventions alongside teacher-researchers.

The paper will be presented by Lydia Kokkola on behalf of Eva Fjällström and Adrian Rodriguez.

## Session VIII

### Big Data and Reading

#### Modelling the Dynamic of the Reading: The READ-IT Project

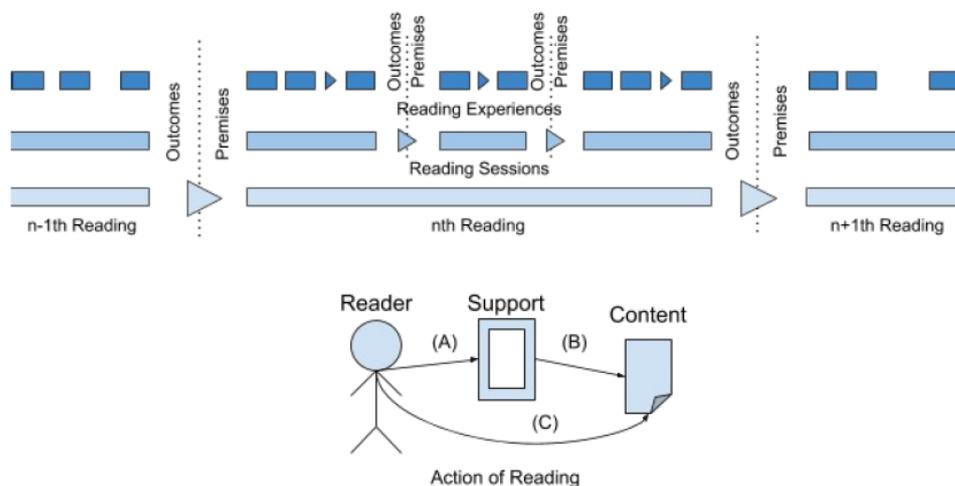
François Vignale, Le Mans University

Regarding history of reading practices, knowledge has significantly increased over the last decades about what, where and when people read. Nevertheless, two major questions remain unanswered: why and how do people read, which can also be decomposed in a series of subordinated questions:

- a. What kind of transaction exists between a reader and a text?
- b. What role does the environment play in this transaction?
- c. Is it possible to list and model the emotions caused by reading?
- d. Have these emotions changed throughout time and space in Europe?
- e. Is it possible to sketch out the portrait of something like the “European reader”?

Through a large-scale investigation tool to identify and share evidence about 18th-21st century Reading culture, READ-IT (Reading Europe Advanced Data Investigation Tool) project - JPI-CH funded, 2018-2020 - wants to address these questions. Building on previous projects, the data model occupies a central place in READ-IT because it will enable scholars to account for the multiple dimensions of the act of reading, while relying on a wide variety of multi-modal and multilingual sources with a wide chronological and geographical extent, thus facilitating new ways of understanding and analyzing potential changes in Reading culture.

Our approach relies on several principles (multi-facet approach, database of evidences, alignment with external referentials, data- and use-case driven validation) and the incorporation of established standards (Foaf, CIDOC-CRM, FRBRoo). Here, the backbone of the data model is the dynamic of reading as an activity expressed with three distinct concepts: Reading, Reading Session and Reading Experience. Considering this, the key notion is the event which includes the core element, that is to say the reader interacting with a content through a support in specific circumstances (place, time, alone, solitary ...) and in a specific environment (lighting, position, location ...).



## **Bibliographic Data Science**

Leo Lahti, Jani Marjanen, Hege Roivainen, Mikko Tolonen, Helsinki Computational History Group

The use of library catalogues as research material has been rapidly increasing in the recent years. Library catalogues contain rich metadata on knowledge production trends, with the potential to verify and complement earlier hypotheses as well as to uncover previously overlooked historical trends. However, obtaining valid conclusions depends on the overall understanding of the historical context as well as data quality. We demonstrate how newly developed bibliographic data science ecosystem can help to overcome the prevailing bottlenecks and has the potential to renew our understanding of knowledge production and the public sphere. In particular, we provide examples based on our recent work based on the integration of data from four large bibliographies that we have extensively harmonized. These include the Finnish and Swedish National Bibliographies, the English Short-Title Catalogue, and the Heritage of the Printed Book database, covering altogether 2.64 million harmonized entries from the investigated period. We characterize patterns in reading habits and changes in the publishing landscape across different genres over time and geography during the period c. 1500-1800. An important aspect of this work is to proceed from data browsing interfaces towards a more systematic computational integration and analysis of the available data resources based on the latest advances in modern data science. As such, our work provides an example on how the use of big data and new quantitative methods can enrich more traditional forms of research in literary studies. The contribution of this work is not merely in the development or application of new algorithms or exploration techniques, but in demonstrating their wider potential in advancing the overall methodological basis of the field.

## **Detecting social structures using library loan data**

Olli Nurmi, VTT Data-Driven Solutions

Library loan data provides information about the how the individuals interact with the library collection forming a new data source to study the reading culture. Currently this data source has not yet been exploited and this paper demonstrates the possibilities of social network analysis in detecting social structures and relations between the books.

Social network analysis is based on graph theory characterizing networked structures in terms of nodes (individual actors, people, or things within the network) and the ties, edges, or links (relationships or interactions) that connect them.

The hypothesis in this study is that simultaneous book loans by the same individual indicates a relationship between the books. By analysis of library loan data it is possible to identify simultaneous loans and generate a networked structure where the books represent nodes that are connected with relationships.

Analysis of this networked structure generates new information about how the network as a whole is operating, reveals the degree to which the network is focused on one or a few nodes, and identifies book clusters.

In the first part of this study the Social Network analysis is verified as research method by using a limited dataset containing Magazine and Travel book loans. In the second part of the structures of the novels, romans and fiction books are analysed more closely to identify central or essential books, book clusters in the network, and those books serving as bridgers in the network.

The contribution of this work is to demonstrate the potential of the social network analysis as a methodology to provide new kind of information about the structures and relationships between the books and their readers.